

REVIEW OF *LE CHANDAIL DE HOCKEY* CD-ROM

Title	<i>Le Chandail de Hockey</i> (The Hockey Sweater)
Platform	Windows 2000 and XP Mac OS X 10.3 or higher CD drive
Software and hardware requirements	QuickTime V.7 Designed for 1024 x 768 resolution
Publisher	3D courseware/ Les Éditions 3D http://www.editions3d.ca/hockey
Support offered	Website: http://www.editions3d.ca/hockey or http://www.editions3d.ca/hockey/fr/Depannage.shtml (in French)
Target language	French
Target audience	Learners of French as a second language (intermediate to advanced level), Francophone students, literacy community
Price	\$34.95 – CD-ROM

Review by Catherine Caws, University of Victoria

Le chandail de hockey is an interactive CD-ROM based on a famous [Roch Carrier](#) short story and features the animated film *Le chandail de hockey* (*The Hockey Sweater*) made by the National Film Board of Canada. *The Hockey Sweater* tells the story of a young boy living in a small town in Québec in the 1940s. For this boy and his friends, life revolves around the ice rink, and hockey is their religion. The boys worship the Montréal Canadiens star Maurice Richard, and all want to wear his sweater. In the story, the young boy's life is devastated when he receives a sweater from the Toronto Maple Leafs instead of Richard's sweater in the mail. Being forced to wear the sweater, he feels rejected by his peers on the ice and finally loses his temper. Reprimanded by the priest for his behavior, he ends up in church praying that his Maple Leaf sweater be devastated by moths. The story can be considered as an allegory of the cultural tensions that existed in the 1960s between Anglophones and Francophones living in Québec, and, since its publication, *Le chandail de hockey* has been one of the best known pieces of French-Canadian literature in Anglophone Canada. In fact, it has become so famous that the 5-dollar Canadian bill features an extract of the story in both official languages ([The hockey sweater, 2007](#)). Over the years, *Le chandail de hockey* has become a classic story, used in many French-as-a-Second-Language programs and courses, from Grade 11 to university courses.

The CD-ROM presents an interactive way to learn more about the story and its cultural contexts, as well as understand the making of the animated film. By allowing learners to interact with a famous piece of French-Canadian literature, the CD-ROM offers opportunities to acquire language skills through authentic documents. As described by Beatty (2003), using literature in CALL has the advantages of exposing learners to a medium that has a "high degree of fidelity, or authenticity, in that the learning materials are both extensive and taken from real-world sources" (p.57).

Le chandail de hockey CD-ROM is primarily geared towards learners of French as a second language. Its main goal is to help learners develop reading and listening skills and expand on the linguistic and cultural context of this piece of French-Canadian literature. Moreover, considering the many activities based on cultural and literary knowledge, this CD-ROM will also be of interest to any French-speaking learners wishing to enrich their understanding of the story. The CD-ROM contains three study guides (called *Périodes* 'Sections'), each proposing activities for three proficiency levels (near-beginner, intermediate, and advanced), a task-based learning area (called *Zone*), and a cultural enrichment area (called *Rencontres*

'Encounters'). The activities directed at the advanced levels are also suited for Francophone users (described as *pro*, 'professionals', in the program). In order to enhance the culture of hockey that is omnipresent in the original story, the authors of the CD-ROM have used hockey terminology to refer to various aspects of the learning tool. For instance, the near-beginner level is also called *peewee* 'beginners' within the context of hockey, and the activities and features are organized around three *périodes* (to relate to the 3 periods of 20 minutes each that make a full hockey game).

The first section (**1^{ère} période**) focuses on listening skills. To start, users can watch the full version of the animated film (10 minutes) about the *Hockey Sweater*, or view short clips of parts of the story, before testing their aural comprehension (the program presents a total of 8 clips of less than a minute each that summarize the main ideas of the story; each clip retelling parts of the original story). A drag-and-drop activity (Figure 1) linking French pronunciation to pictures addresses the beginner level while more lengthy aural comprehension activities are geared toward the advanced level. The comprehension activities will force learners to be attentive to the content of the story and probably return to the film before they can answer the questions. The third activity is another drag-and-drop activity for the intermediate level that links recorded extracts of the story to pictures featured in the animated film.



Figure 1. Sample drag-and-drop activity screen

The second section (**2^e période**) focuses on listening and reading skills. In this section, users view the film while reading the transcript on the left so that they can associate sound with the text. This listening and reading activity will be easy for intermediate and advanced students. Near-beginner students might have a more difficulty making the association between sound and text because at times the text on the left is lengthy (Figure 2), and, as the story is told, the words in the text are not highlighted (a feature that would help near-beginner learners). However, users can click on almost any word in the text to open a dictionary.



Figure 2. Sample reading and listening screen

Users can also click on the *culture* link for cultural annotations related to aspects of the story as it unfolds. For instance, as shown in Figure 2 above, a paragraph explains what *Hockey Night in Canada* (*Soirée du hockey*) is all about. This is an excellent feature for students who may lack knowledge regarding aspects of the culture of hockey, i.e., what hockey represents for Canadians. The annotations, written by the authors of the CD and illustrated at times by authentic documents from the Canadian National Archives are very informative and can be exploited in many ways by instructors of French, either for cultural or linguistic purposes. This second section also contains activities addressing the three levels of language proficiency. Each level contains between 7 and 9 different activities, from easy (e.g., matching words to pictures) to difficult (e.g., plot puzzles, a sentence sequencing task). At first glance, these activities seem to follow mostly a behaviourist approach by providing series of exercises where students respond to stimuli; however, a user can navigate from one activity, or level, to another without having to finish a level. This flexibility has the advantage of giving more autonomy to the learner, and, thus, the activities accommodate various learning styles and needs (Benson & Voller, 1997).

In the second section (**2^e période**), the activities are more varied than in the first section (**1^{ère} période**). They include matching activities (drag-and-drop vocabulary exercises to match words to pictures), fill-in-the-blank dictations, exercises aiming at testing cultural knowledge and vocabulary, and reading comprehension. As an example, the written comprehension exercises addressing near-beginner learners (Figure 3) contain 22 questions that the user can hear and read. Each question offers four possible answers, each providing specific feedback to help students. Indeed, instead of a simple, *yes/no/try-again* feedback, the program uses more authentic feedback and thus simulates a real class experience. Alternatively, thanks to the interactive nature of this learning tool, learners can navigate back and forth between the activities and the film contained in the first section. Part of this interactivity is made possible by hypertext functions that are considered an ideal tool for showing the interconnections between ideas and themes in a program or a text, for activating semantic and lexical connotations, and for helping learners access information (Beatty, 2003; Redon-Dilax, 2000).

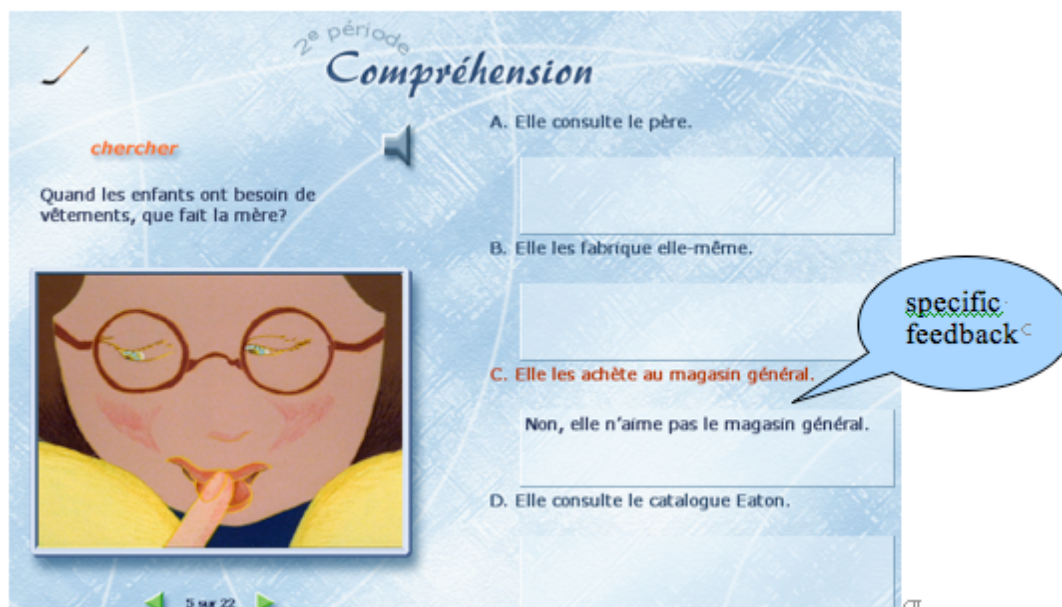


Figure 3. Sample reading comprehension activity screen

The third section (3^e période) expands on the main ideas of the film by focusing on listening, reading, and writing activities. It is sub-divided into five sections (*Hockey; a song about the hockey player Maurice Richard; hockey stars; original pages from the 1946-1947 Eaton catalogue (clothing); and additional Canadian Heritage notes*). In the sub-section about hockey, users have access to 14 pages of notes relating to the story and the culture of hockey in Canada (e.g., *Saturday Hockey Night in Canada, the Canadian National Hockey League*). Using hypertext links, learners can navigate from one page to another and organize their discovery of the culture of hockey (Figure 4).

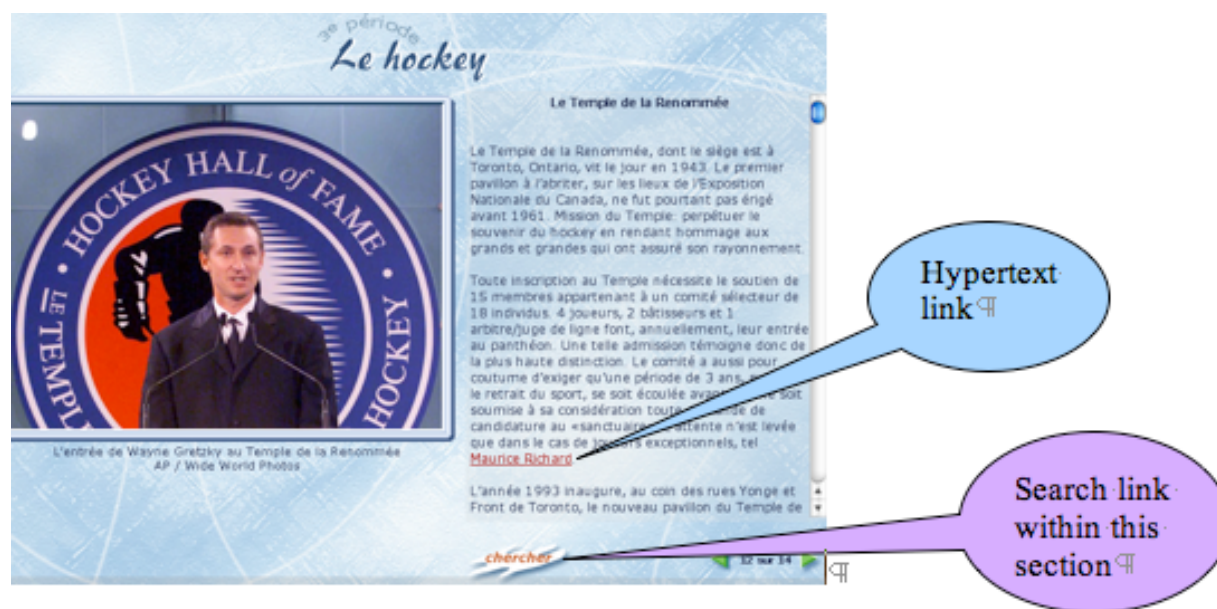


Figure 4. Sample hockey notes in third section

All the texts contained in this sub-section were written by the authors of the CD and are illustrated by authentic pictures or arts originating from the National Art Gallery or the National Hockey League.

The third section also contains other artifacts allowing users to expand their understanding of the story, its setting in the 1940s, and the broader cultural context. The authentic song written in 1971 about the Canadian hockey player Maurice Richard (the player considered a hero by the young boy in the *Hockey Sweater* story) relates facts about this hockey legend and reflects the popularity of the game of hockey in Canada. The Eaton catalogue (Eaton is now a department store) provides virtual access to original pages of the 1946-1947 catalogue used by many families in Canada to order clothes and other items (Figure 5). It gives a sense of the fashion at the time of the story, and learners can complete a virtual online order. This sub-section also includes two exercises (matching words to pictures) for either the near-beginner level or the advanced level. No exercises specifically address the intermediate level in this section, but these learners could work on the more advanced level and do the activities several times. However, each exercise contains only ten items of clothing and thus provides limited practice and lexical enrichment.



Figure 5. Sample page from an original Eaton Catalogue

The next sub-section in the *3^e période* contains 31 hockey cards (under the sub-heading *Les étoiles*, 'hockey stars') that learners can explore to learn more about famous Canadian hockey players. Each card presents a picture and text on the front explaining the influence that this player had on hockey. The card can be flipped by pressing a button, and on the back users will find the player statistics and biographical information. Finally, the last sub-section contained in *3^e période* includes nine multimedia cultural notes to supplement the story. Each screen contains a text, written by the authors of the CD-ROM or by Gisèle Villeneuve, a Canadian bilingual writer and narrator. These cultural notes based on Canadian heritage are meant to help learners appreciate some aspects of French-Canadian society (e.g., one note explains the influence of the church in small villages in Québec in the 1940s). Some of these notes can be viewed in synchronization with the film in the second section (*2^e période*).

Unlike the other two sections, users do not have access to many specific exercises related to these texts or artefacts. At first glance, this section seems to address primarily Francophone students due to the fairly high linguistic level of these French documents and the focus on reading. However, students of French as a second language can easily use these notes to enrich their comprehension of French-Canadian society and culture. In addition, they may use the in-built dictionary to improve their reading comprehension by clicking on the words in the texts. The notes can also be explored in class using a combination of

learning activities. For example, the teacher could design questions to test students' comprehension of the documents; a lexical "treasure hunt" could be designed using the catalogue; biographical questions can be formed either by the teacher or students using the hockey cards; or the song may be used to work on pronunciation or adapted to create other, similar lyrics for a favorite hockey star.

The section called **Zone** focuses on task-based activities. It contains extended activities based on two artifacts: the Eaton catalogue (Figure 5) and hockey cards. In this section, the Eaton catalogue gives access to exactly the same activities as the one mentioned above (in the 3^e période), and thus it is debatable whether it is necessary to have this activity in both places. In the other section of the Zone, users can continue their discovery of famous past and present hockey players, such as Maurice Richard or Wayne Gretzky, and build albums, such as a scrapbook to describe and explain what their dream team would be (Figure 6). This activity will be a favorite of hockey fans but might not appeal to all learners.

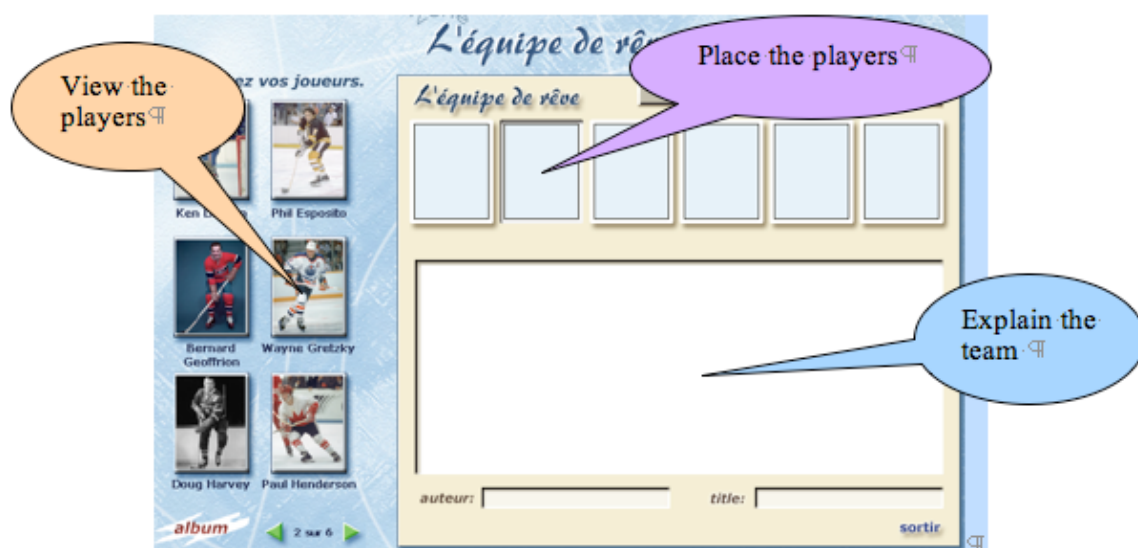


Figure 6. Sample of activity in the *Zone* section

Another fascinating part of the CD is found in **Rencontres** ('Encounters'). Here, learners can meet with the author of the story, Roch Carrier, and with Marcel Dargis, the artist who painted the scenes for the animated movie, through a series of short monologues based on interviews recorded specifically for this CD-ROM. The videos are organized around themes (e.g., the culture of hockey, the Eaton catalogue, the story's genesis, the importance of radio in the 1940s, Roch Carrier and his experience with sports) that are analyzed and commented on by either Carrier or Dargis, depending on the theme explored. In *Rencontres*, the other key contributors to the story's success are also featured: Sheila Fishman, literary translator of the story into English, and Sheldon Cohen, who directed the animated film at the National Film Board of Canada. This section of the CD-ROM contains excellent cultural artifacts, such as other paintings by Dargis that depict life at the time of the story, the 1940s. These interviews and documents make us appreciate all the features that may contribute to a story's success, namely the collaboration that existed between the artists involved in the making of the animated version of *The Hockey Sweater*. Pedagogically, the interviews of Carrier and Dargis can be exploited to critically analyze cultural aspects of the original story and the animated film, especially for learners at the intermediate and advanced levels.

At the bottom of the screen, users have access to other functions: *log-out*, *home*, *notebook*, *dictionary* and *help*. The **Notebook** (Figure 7) lets learners record their answers or type notes as they explore the CD-ROM. They have the option to save and print these notes. However, it should be noted that the *file*

function keys (*new, open, print, close, save, delete*) would be more accessible as buttons either at the top or bottom of the notebook (at present they are hidden behind the notebook).

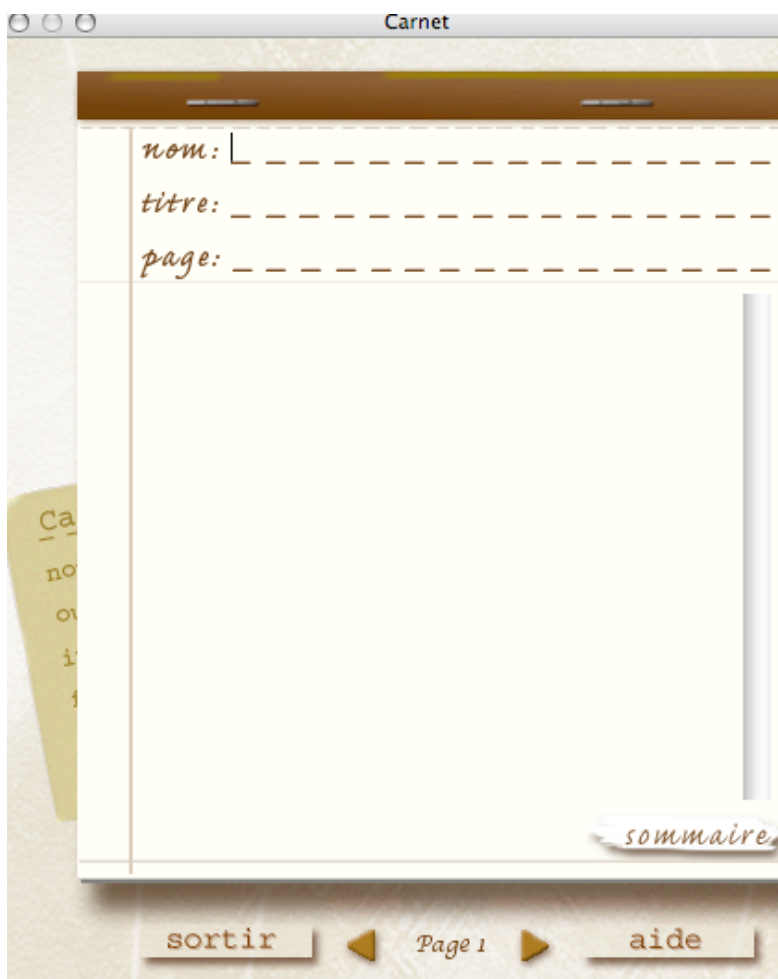


Figure 7. Sample screen of the notebook function

The **Dictionary**'s screen is organized into three parts (Figure 8): letters of the alphabet at the top, where users can click to access specific words or expressions from the story and the various written documents; a frame on the left showing all the words included in the dictionary, and a frame on the right containing the information specific to the word that was selected (definition, pronunciation, collocations). Each word is defined through explanatory sentences and is often illustrated in a full sentence. Other notable features of the dictionary include the access to pronunciation (users can hear the words pronounced in standard French by a female voice), derivatives of the word, and presentation of synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms of the word.

On a technological note, the **Help** menu is succinct but clear, available in either French or English. It underlines the main components of the CD-ROM and explains all the key features of each screen (users simply click on the frames in a sample screen). Navigating through this program is easy and users can easily work in synchronization between two sections in order to take full advantage of all the information included in the program (e.g., they can explore the story in the second section while reading about key cultural artifacts in the third section or listening to the interviews with Roch Carrier).



Figure 8. Sample of a dictionary page

Overall, this CD-ROM is a welcome addition to both the literary and animated versions of *Le chandail de hockey*. The interactive nature of this learning tool will help learners of French as a second language develop a better appreciation of the culture in which this story is rooted. The cultural notes are rich but not overwhelmingly detailed, well presented, yet simply organized.

Learners in high school and in beginner university or college French courses will appreciate the varied interactive activities to test their language skills and their comprehension. One minor flaw is that users cannot easily zoom back and forth throughout the video in order to jump to one particular point in the story. Such a feature would let users listen to parts of the clips that they had not mastered during the first listening. Teachers could also use this feature to enhance specific sounds or words in context and particular syntactical characteristics.

At first glance, *Le chandail de hockey* CD-Rom seems to require a fairly good understanding of the French language. However, after exploring the CD-ROM in depth, the reviewer concludes that because all the functions can be repeated more than once (including the exercises), and because the help functions offer both French and English explanations, *Le chandail de hockey* offers a good balance of autonomy and guided activity (Duquette & Laurier, 2000). A motivated beginner-advanced learner could greatly enhance his/her level of aural and reading comprehension in French as well as get a better sense of the story's cultural and historical value. In fact, the best quality of this tool probably resides in its ability to place culture at the very core of language learning. Learners and instructors of French will find valuable activities and references in the *Le chandail de hockey* CD-ROM. Finally, the reviewer sees additional benefits of using this CD-ROM if it is combined with other authentic materials, such as the short story book by Carrier, *Les enfants du bonhomme dans la lune* (published in 1998), or web sites featuring Roch Carrier (such as the Library and Archives Canada sites that includes information on Carrier, <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/>) or the original story (such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

archives site, <http://archives.cbc.ca/>). This would allow learners to further develop their language skills while developing some degree of multi-literacy, a skill recognized by educators as being essential in today's world of learning (Gonglewski & DuBravac, 2006).

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Catherine G. Caws is an Assistant Professor in the Department of French at the University of Victoria, Canada. She teaches language and linguistics courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels and concentrates her research on projects related to CALL, second language acquisition, and learning and teaching in higher education. In the last two years, she has been working on developing and testing a learning object repository for French (www.flore.uvic.ca), a project financially supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada .

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